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A new race of the Blackcrested Baza, *Aviceda leuphotes* (Dumont), from the Andaman Islands

BY

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In February 1969 an attempt was made to visit Narcondam Island, 80 miles east of North Andaman Island. A party of three assembled for the purpose at Port Blair, in the Andamans, but the arrangements for the Narcondam trip went awry and H.A. returned a few days later leaving behind Rex Pimento and R.B.G., both of the Bombay Natural History Society, as there was still a chance of the trip to Narcondam coming off. During their wait these two collected some 130 birds in the neighbourhood of Port Blair and on some islands further south, on which H.A. will report later. The present note concerns two specimens of the Blackcrested Baza, *Aviceda leuphotes* (Dumont), a species not previously recorded from the Andamans, obtained by them at Wrightmyo in South Andaman Island.

The specimens of *Aviceda leuphotes* already in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society are from India and Burma, and have been assigned to the subspecies *A. l. leuphotes* (Dumont) (Type locality : Pondicherry) and *A. l. syama* (Hodgson) (Type locality : Lower region of Nepal) in accordance with their places of origin (1969, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **65** : 697). The present specimens differ strikingly from the India and Burma specimens in :

(a) having a thin, and not broad, blackish-rufous bar across the upper breast following the white ;

(b) this band being followed in the case of the male by only one chestnut band and in the female by only two chestnut bands, leaving the rest of the underparts unbarred ;

(c) the unbarred portion of the lower breast being more intensely rufous than in the specimens from India and Burma, and

(d) the wings ♂ 223, ♀ 224 being slightly smaller than in 45 birds at the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) from northern and southern India, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and Malacca kindly measured for us by Mr. D. J. Freeman of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) as (excluding one 220 mm. ♂) 224-251 av. 235.8 mm.

As regards (b) and (c) above, Mr. Freeman states that the material available to him varies greatly in the amount of barring, and 3 of 4 birds from Ceylon, which otherwise agree with *A. l. leuphotes* and have pale breasts, are virtually without barring.

The ♂ had testes 12 mm. and the ♀ 3 mm. ovaries, which fact together with their behaviour suggests a courting pair and leaves little doubt that this species, though so far overlooked, is resident in the Andamans.

On these differences, we separate the Andaman birds as :

***Aviceda leuphotes andamanica* subsp. nov.**

Type and paratype : ♂ No. 23112 and ♀ 23113 in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society, obtained by Robert B. Grubb and Rex Pimento at Wrightmyo, South Andaman Island, on 9th April 1969.

A list of specimens from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands received from the Zoological Survey of India included specimen No. 23177 obtained in the Andamans and designated as *Baza leuphotes*. The specimen itself was not traceable and no additional data are available thereon.

In view of the limited amount of material available in Bombay, these two specimens were sent to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and to the American Museum of Natural History. We are grateful to Messrs I. C. Galbraith and D. J. Freeman of the former institute and Dr. Dean Amadon and Mrs. LeCroy of the latter for their comments and observations which have been of considerable help to us in deciding to describe a new subspecies.